

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 207 303

EC 140 046

AUTHOR Bradtke, Jane Silverman
TITLE Desk and Chair Activities for Fun and Fitness.
INSTITUTION American Alliance for Health, Physical Education,
Recreation and Dance, Reston, Va. Information and
Research Utilization Center.
PUB DATE Feb 79
NOTE 16p.
AVAILABLE FROM American Alliance for Health, Physical Education,
Recreation and Dance, 1900 Association Dr., Reston,
VA 22091 (\$2.00).
JOURNAL CIT Practical Pointers; v2 n8 Feb 1979
EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Class Activities; *Disabilities; Elementary
Education; Games; Motor Development; *Physical
Activities; *Physical Fitness

ABSTRACT

Desk and chair activities for use with handicapped and nonhandicapped elementary children in the classroom are described. The activities require minimal equipment while providing opportunities for vigorous physical movement. Activities are discussed which feature using the aisles between desks, sitting at the desks, and performing circuit and station activities around the classroom. (CL)

* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *

PRACTICAL POINTERS

American Alliance for
Health, Physical Education
and Recreation
Physical Education and Recreation
for the Handicapped: Information
and Research Utilization Center
1201 16th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

- ☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Volume 2, Number 8
February 1979

DESK AND CHAIR ACTIVITIES FOR FUN AND FITNESS

IN THIS ISSUE

Equipment.....	3
Desk Activities.....	4
Let's Add More Desks.....	5
Even More Desks.....	6
Still at a Desk.....	7
Circle Activities.....	10
Obstacle Courses.....	10
Circuit and Station Activities.....	10
Miscellaneous Activities and Games.....	11
Do You Like to Go to the Circus.....	14
A Few Final Thoughts.....	14

Creative teachers have long used desks and chairs in many different ways for a variety of purposes. Jane Silverman Bradtke, AAHPER/IRUC Information and Materials Assistant, has captured within the pages of this Practical Pointer some innovative and different ways to use desks and chairs so as to interest and motivate children to move, become physically fit, and have fun. Jane Bradtke illustrated her own work to add to the presentation and impact of her words. These desk and chair activities can be used with children regardless of types or severities of handicapping conditions. Contents and emphasis of this Practical Pointer exemplifies the learn to move, move to learn philosophy. Thanks Jane for another publication well done.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS
MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY
HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Julian Stein

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

It is mid-afternoon at Emanon Elementary School--your fifth grade class (or first, second...) has just finished an arithmetic test. Restlessness is pervasive. Alan pulls Debbie's hair; Rich's geography book keeps accidentally falling on the floor; white spots continue to flash before your eyes before you realize they are moisture missies (spit balls, paper wads...)!! It is definitely time for a break--time to chanel pent-up energies into constructive activities. The gymnasium is being used by the sixth grade for basketball activities; a good softball game outside would be perfect. That's what you'll do! Then, you see a flash of light, followed by a loud clap of thunder, and a downpour. Now what?!!!

* * *

Grahamwood Elementary School is small and located in the heart of downtown. Not only is there no playground, but no gymnasium or formal physical education program. Having a classroom full of children for hours on end is not proving to be healthy for students--or for you. Arts and crafts and music help break up the day, but vigorous activities are essential. What can be done?!!!

* * *

These examples are not uncommon and can leave teachers with frustrating situations. Children need physical activities. It is fundamental to success in other school areas and productive classroom experiences. Physicians and child growth and development specialists agree that a first grade child needs four to five hours of physical activity a day. How attentive can a child be who has done nothing but sit for hours on end? Some games provide diversion, but generally not essential vigorous physical exercise or activity. This Practical Pointer--Desk and Chair Activities for Fun and Fitness--attempts to help relieve some of these problems by presenting physical activities designed for typical classroom settings. These suggestions should not only help keep teachers from pulling their hair out on rainy days--and keep children from climbing the walls--but also provide vigorous, challenging physical activities that every growing body needs for intellectual, social, and emotional growth as well as physical and motor development.

Desk and chair activities can be used successfully with children possessing various handicapping conditions. There is no reason why children with mild or moderate mental retardation can not perform these tasks and participate actively in all individual activities, relay races, and games. When instructions are clear and concise, everyone understands what is expected so that activities move along smoothly.

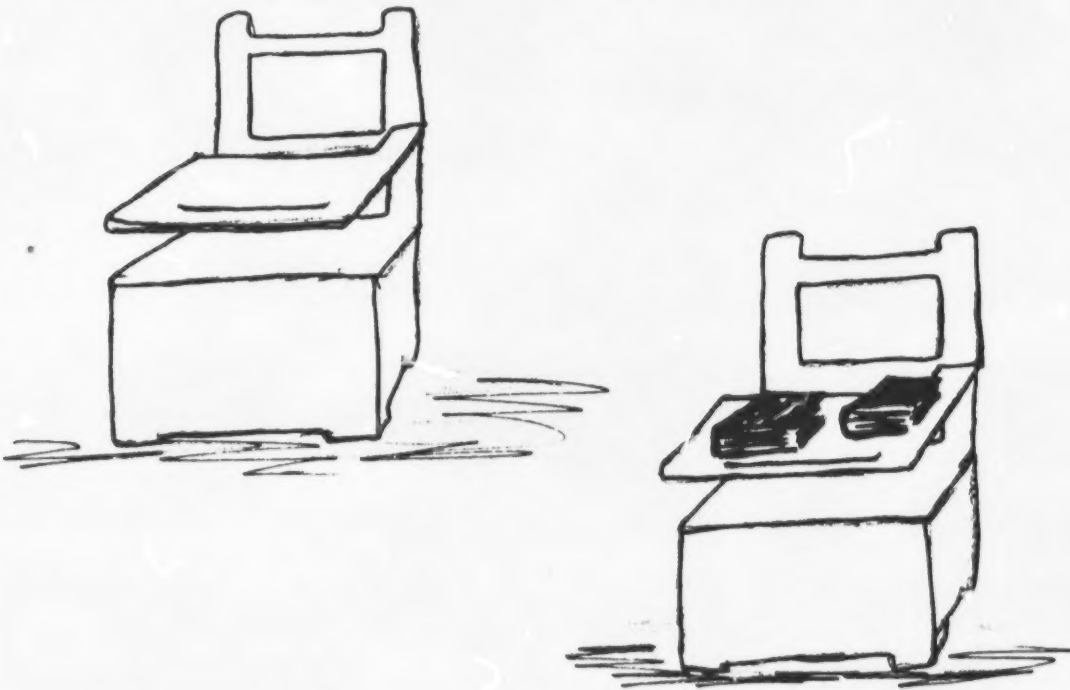
Children in wheelchairs can participate actively. The only modification necessary is to provide extra room to allow maneuvering around desks or up and down aisles. Some of these students may not be able to stand on chairs or seats of desks, or hop on one foot, but all other activities mentioned are quite suitable. Students in wheelchairs should be encouraged to devise their own interpretations of movements they cannot do in conventional or usual ways. Many students in wheelchairs jump, hop, leap, gallop, ... In other situations students in wheelchairs can crawl, creep, or perform activities on gym scooters or scooter boards,

Hearing impaired, including both deaf and hard of hearing children, should experience no problems at all as long as instructions are clear and concise. Demonstration and active participation are great teachers for all children, especially those who have receptive communication difficulties.

Partially sighted and blind students can also take part in desk and chair activities. Clear explanation are musts for these children; once concepts are understood maneuvering around desks should become a matter of feeling out situations. For relays, a partner can be assigned to run along and verbally direct or lend an elbow for physical assistance. One way to equalize competition is to blindfold children on other teams. This is also an excellent learning situation so that sighted children in a class experience blindness.

Equipment

Questions arise--what kinds of real physical activities can be done in classrooms? There is no room for equipment, no space to run--just desks, tables, chairs of all types, and books! Exactly!!! Answers lie in the questions!!! Equipment for most of these activities consists of desks, tables, chairs, and books. Additional equipment may be required for some games, but nothing that can not easily be found at home in a garage or quite inexpensively at a store.



Desk Activities

Let's look at a typical schoolroom desk. What sort of physical activities can be enjoyed by each child at his/her desk? The following problems to solve and opportunities to explore evoke much activity, enthusiasm, and maybe a bit of giggling from a classroom of children who are ready to move.

- . Stand* on the seat of your desk; step back to the floor! Up to the seat again! Back to the floor!...



- . Squeeze underneath the table of your desk.



- . Walk around your desk (forward, backward, sideward).
- . Take giant (baby, scissor) steps around your desk.
- . Jump around your desk (fast, slow, big, small).
- . Hop around your desk (alternate feet, two on one foot, three on the other).
- . Hop like a frog (rabbit, kangaroo, cricket, grasshopper) around your desk.



* Problem solving or exploratory techniques use positive statements, not introductory words such as "Can you..." which can back you as an instructor or leader into an untenable corner!

- . Show me how a dog (horse, cat, cow, turtle, butterfly, mouse) would go around your desk.
- . Run around your desk as fast/slow (loud/quiet) as you can!
- . Skip around your desk.
- . Put your right/left foot on the seat of your desk and then the left/right foot so that you are standing on the desk seat. Do this five (ten, twenty) times.
- . Balance on the one foot, eyes open/closed, hands high/low.
- . Pick up your desk and hold it ten (twenty) seconds.

Varations. Have the class repeat above activities while clapping, whistling Dixie, singing a song, being happy (sad, mad, silly), fast, slow-motion, quietly, loudly.

Let's Add More Desks



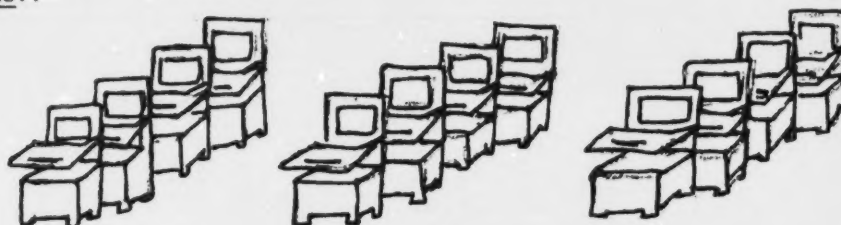
- . Stay in line and walk (run, skip, jump, hop, crawl, creep) around your row of desks.
- . Follow-the-leader around the row of desks; change leaders frequently.



- . Walk (run, skip, jump, hop, crawl, creep) around row of desks moving in and out between desks (like in and out of the windows).
- . Pretend to be dogs (horses, cats, cows, turtles, butterflies, mice) as you walk around a row of desks.
- . Put your right foot on the seat of your desk and step up onto the seat; move to the next desk in the row and repeat; person at the last desk should quickly come to the front desk.

Variations. Use variations mentioned with single desk activities. Do these same activities moving in lateral files rather than forward and backward rows.

Even More Desks!!



As numbers of desks increase, so do possible activities. With several rows of desks, a variety of relay races and games can be introduced--use your imagination

- Running race. Children line up at the front of their rows. At the sound of the teacher's clap, the first person for each team runs (jumps, hops, skips, crawls, creeps) in and out between each desk to the end of the row and back in the same/different way. Each person on the team goes in turn. The first team to have all members complete the task wins the relay. Keep each team relatively small so that emphasis is on active participation, not standing in line and waiting for turns.
- Book relay. Using the same formation for teams as in running race, collect one book per desk--in a row of six desks, there will be six books. The first person of each team holds all books; at the sound of "Go" he/she places one book on each desk in the row. At the end of the row, he/she changes directions and comes back, this time collecting books, handing them to the next person in line who repeats the process.



Variations. Have half the members of teams at opposite ends of each row. In this situation half the team members distribute books on desks to the end of a row. After which awaiting members of teams begin to pick them up alternating in this manner until all team members have taken turns, a given number of laps are completed, or a specific time period has elapsed. In large classes, this eliminates long waits in line.

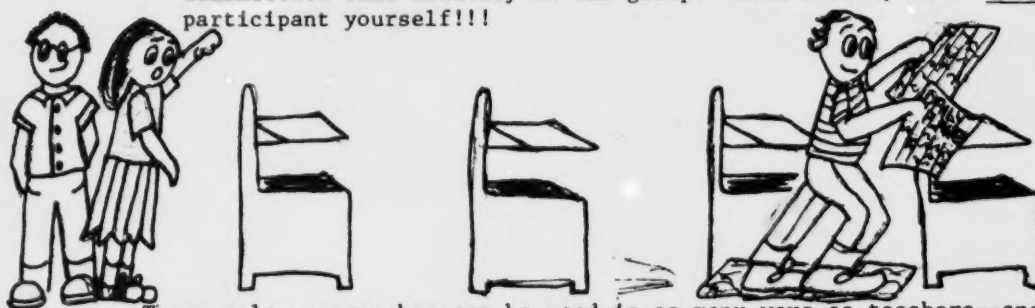
Have students set books on their sides as they are placed on desk tops.

Have first student place books on desks, next one picks them up, alternating in this manner until the relay is completed.

- Jump rope relay. Are jump ropes available? If so, use the basic formation already discussed, but have each team member jump rope to the end of the row and back. Make jump ropes from clothes line if actual jump ropes are not available. Introduce and include appropriate variations for children who for whatever reason cannot jump rope.



- Newspaper relay. Divided into teams, individuals walk with each foot on a piece of newspaper to the goal line and back while holding a piece of newspaper in each hand. A variation for this is to use shoe boxes or other cardboard boxes on each foot. This relay is good for mentally retarded, visually impaired, and hearing impaired children. Keep directions simple. It might be helpful for a teacher to demonstrate this activity to the group. Even better, be an active participant yourself!!!



These relay approaches can be used in as many ways as teachers--and students--can think of ideas. Additional variations include skipping, galloping, scissors walking, hopping, running backwards, skipping backwards, leaping sideward, balancing a book on the runner's head, putting hats on and off, and imitating various animals.

Still at a Desk



The following exercises are intended to be done while students are seated at their desks. This entire series can be accomplished in approximately seven minutes. Since these exercises can be performed at a desk while students are seated, they disrupt classes very little, and are recommended for times of days when children are restless, but too much time or commotion are neither appropriate nor desirable.

All positions should be held to counts of six and repeated several times unless otherwise indicated. Obviously, children in wheelchairs can easily take part in these activities with little or no adaptation.

- 
- . Place hands and arms under the desk and force upward as hard as possible; do with palms up/down.
- 
- . Grab the bottom of the desk seat with both hands; pull up with shoulders and hands as hard as possible.
- 
- . Push up with upper legs on bottom of the desk and push down with lower arms on top of the desk.
- 
- . Place outsides of feet against insides of front chair legs and push out forcibly; reverse with insides of feet against outsides of front chair legs and push in forcibly.
- 
- . Lift lower legs up, pull toes back and stretch arms forcibly back, stretching, stretching, stretching!
- 
- . Lean over desk, keep back straight, and grasp front edge of desk with arms extended over top of desk; pull back hard.
- 
- . Wrap legs around legs of desk and pull forward/push backward.
- 
- . Lift legs and reach out with stiff arms to touch toes.



Grasp the back legs of the desk and pull upward and forward--keep shoulders locked.



Grasp hands behind the head, keep the neck straight, force head back and hands forward.



. Flutterkick as in swimming for one (two, three) minutes.



. Place both hands inside desk and push out on the inside of the desk; place palms/backs of hands against sides of desk.



. Rotate head in one direction for about thirty seconds; repeat in the opposite direction.



. Place both arms out to the side and force shoulders back, turn palms of hands up and rotate whole arm (stiff armed) in small circles; start with backward motion.

A good way to lead these exercises is for teachers to do them right along with the students--they are good fitness exercises for teachers too!!! These isometric exercises are performed by astronauts and others who are confined to small areas for long periods of time. This might be of interest to your students. They can name different kinds of people who need to do such exercises then pretend to be these people as they perform the exercises. Kids love to be astronauts!!

Circle Activities

Have class members arrange their desks into a large circle to allow much activity space for interesting circle games and activities. All activities mentioned for individual desks and chairs can be done with this formation.



- . Place a mat in the middle of the circle and have individuals perform stunts or other activities when they are called. Many variations are possible--have a student leader decide stunts to be performed; add-on so that each participant does a new stunt in addition to ones performed by those who preceded him/her; free choice by each participant.

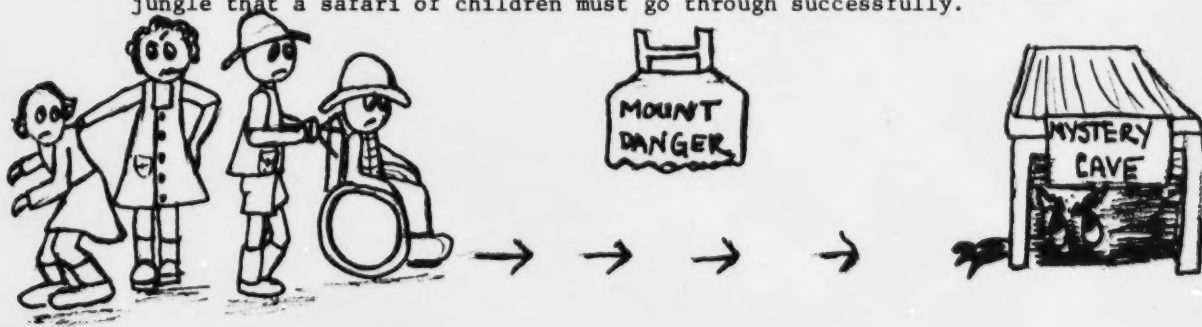
- . Introduce circle games such as follow-the-leader, musical chairs, and duck-duck-goose.

- . Guess Who. One person is asked to leave the room so that a leader can secretly be chosen. This leader gives different gestures and motions at his/her discretion while the rest of the group follows exactly as the leader directs. The person who has left the room gets three guesses to select the leader.



Obstacle Courses

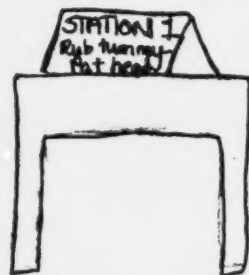
Scatter chairs throughout the classroom and use them for various obstacles so that students can perform basic movement activities around the area. Chairs and desks can become mountains to climb, tunnels to crawl through, bridges to go under, detours to go around, girders on which to balance, dangerous people-eating monsters to squeeze between!! The classroom can become an exciting jungle that a safari of children must go through successfully.



Circuit and Station Activities

Using chairs and desks, set up around the classroom various stations in a circuit so that each child can go to specific stations and perform designated tasks. Two separate circuits can be set up with a class divided into teams. The first team which completely finishes tasks at each station within its circuit is the winning team. For variation of responsibilities and activities

among the classmates, assign students to man stations and call out tasks; have different students decide tasks to be performed at each station. For more detailed ideas on circuit and station activities see Practical Pointer Volume 1, Number 2, Circuit and Station Activity Approaches (available from AAHPER/IRUC, 1201 16th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., 20036, for \$2.00).



Miscellaneous Activities and Games

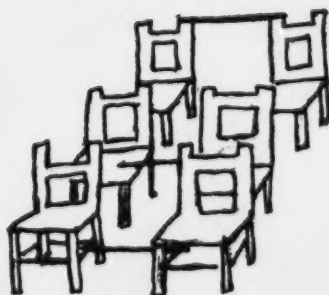
One idea for a desk or chair activity will spark ideas for other activities. The following ideas are presented for use, modification, adaptation, and fuel for further thought and innovation.



- Who says a desk or chair can only be used right-side up? Try this--turn a chair up-side down and toss quoits--rubber quoits, rope rings, or garden hose made into rings of different sizes--toward legs of the chair. A challenging game is made when a scoring system is devised.



- Place 2x4's, broom handles, wooden dowels, or other kinds of poles between rungs of chairs and/or across chair seat--crawl/creep under, step over, move under and over in various combinations.



- Place obstacles in a series with each stick or pole at a different height.

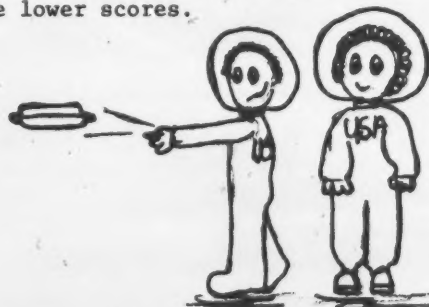
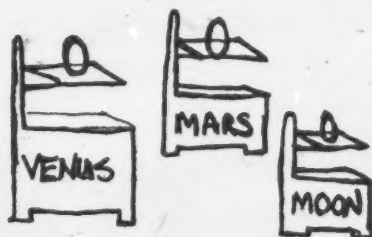
- Use scooter boards or gym scooters to go under and around these obstacles in different combinations.



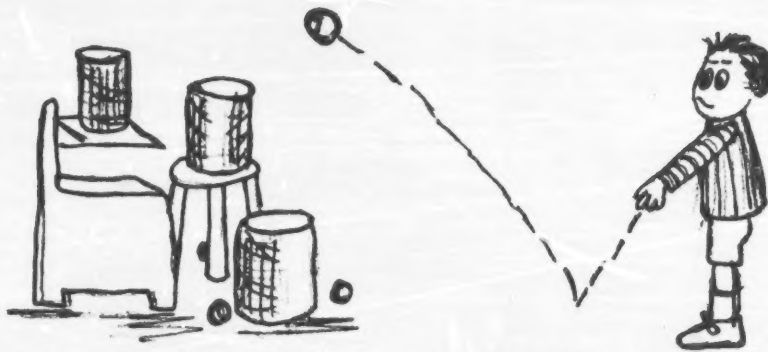
- Approach so that an individual has to go over and under obstacles in combinations after (1) demonstrations involving visual input and stimuli, and (2) auditory input as direct commands or problems to solve using exploratory approaches. Increase the number of tasks in the series that the individual must perform as a means of improving sequencing. Interrupt this process by using signals for stop and go. Introduce relationships of red lights and stop, green lights and go.

Chairs and desks can be arranged for use in games requiring throwing skills and hand-eye coordination.

- Flying Saucers. This simple tossing game is designed for four or five participants. Equipment includes paper plates stapled together; circles cut out of paper or made with string—these resemble planets and the moon and should be set up on chairs at various distances from the throwing line. Toss three flying saucers and try to get highest score possible. Closer planets have lower scores.



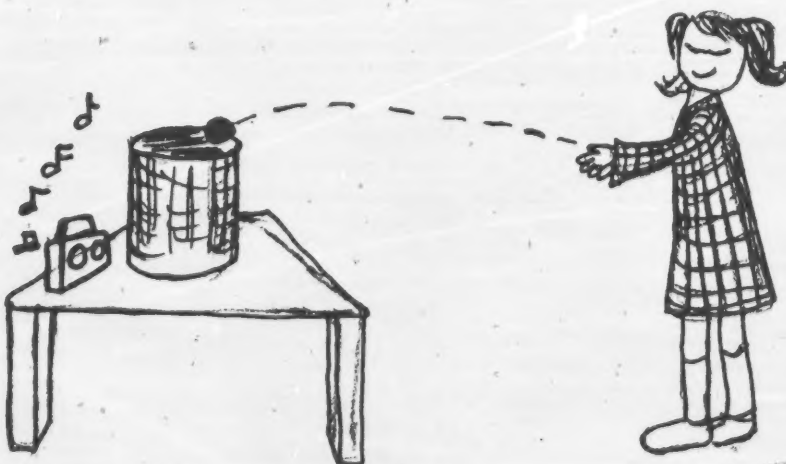
- Bounce a Goal. Required for this game are baskets or containers large enough to hold a bouncing ball. Goals are set up on chairs and desks so that each goal has a different point value. Objective is to bounce a rubber ball off the floor into one of the goals; points are earned by getting the ball into the goals; give each participant a specified number of trials. Total points are tabulated to determine winners. Books can be used to raise or lower goals. (See illustration on next page.)



With simple adaptations these games are suitable for all children. A child confined to a wheelchair derives just as much pleasure from participating in these games as anyone else. For activities requiring crawling and creeping under broom handles, have a child restricted to a wheelchair devise his/her own ways for going under an obstacle. Use limbo approaches for participants in wheelchairs to go under ropes or sticks held by classmates or teachers near the chair.



For games requiring tossing objects to a particular goal, moving goals closer may make the difference between successful and frustrating participation. If a blind child is trying to toss to a goal, have another child make a noise, place a radio, or use some other sound device near the goal so that the blind child can aim by sound. This might be fun and challenging for sighted children to try blind-folded.



Do You Like to go to the Circus?

Probably no one under the sun doesn't love a circus with its animals, acrobats, flying trapeze artists, tightropewalkers, lion trainers, clowns, and When a teacher mentions circus to a classroom full of children, watch for loud and excited responses. If the teacher suggests that all might be in a circus, watch out!!!

Hold a short discussion about circuses. Have members of the class name different people and animals that appear in circuses; list them on the chalk board. Assign or let the class and/or individuals choose what they want to be in the circus. Use desks and chairs to form a three-ring circus with animals and trainer in one circle, acrobats and flying trapeze artists in another circle, and clowns in the third circle. Lively music adds to the spirit and rhythm of performances as the circus parade moves around the room and members of the troupe go to their performing circles. When the circus is ready to present, after a few practices, perhaps teachers and students from other classrooms can be invited to watch. After all, everyone loves the circus!

A Few Final Thoughts

Remember, all of these activities, even basic exercises, should be fun. Keep in mind KISS-MIF!!!!--Keep it super simple--make it fun. Presentation is of utmost importance. Instead of saying "All right class, we're going to exercise now!! They're good for you!!" Why not try this approach--"That was a long arithmetic test, and you all worked very hard. I'll bet you're ready to have some fun, so how about a game of Atlas says!" Then Atlas can say to do all those physical exercises! This is even more effective when the children take turns being Atlas. Activities then become rewards for hard work, not hard work themselves.

Music does much to liven up these activities. Fast and slow music used strategically provides variety in speed, exertion, and fun for ordinary exercises. Add variations to activities by playing records slow to get flow and continuity of movements and give more time to think about what has to be done--or fast for added challenge and fun.*

So, the next time it rains all day or the class and you need breaks, be prepared with various activities. This Practical Pointer has opened some doors, provided some ideas, but is not intended to be all-inclusive. If these activities stimulate your own creative thought, innovation, and resourcefulness and enables you to think of more and different activities, major purpose of this Practical Pointer will be accomplished. Be creative and invent new games and exercises; let your children be creative and invent their own games. Paper-wads may not completely disappear from your class--children will be children--but attitudes and levels of fitness will definitely improve.

* Choosing and Using Phonograph Records for Physical Education, Recreation, and Related Activities (AAHPER Publication Sales, 1201 16th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., 20036, \$3.50) provides descriptions of 181 records that have been used successfully in programs and activities involving participants with handicapping conditions.

Note

Readers are encouraged to share their creative ideas and innovative approaches with others through dissemination mechanics established by the AAHPER Unit on Programs for the Handicapped through Physical Education and Recreation for the Handicapped: Information and Research Utilization Center (IRUC). Send individual ideas, manuscripts for articles and books, information for Practical Pointers, and materials for reprint services to AAHPER/IRUC, 1201 16th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C., 20036. Full credit and visibility are given authors and developers of such materials. Let AAHPER/IRUC know of topics and areas for which future Practical Pointers will be helpful.